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NATURAL PERSPECTIVE — BEATING THE BEETLES



By EMILY J. UHRIG, PH.D.
Special to Siuslaw News

With winter nearing its close, we're entering spring cleaning season. In suburban yards, post-winter cleanup usually entails picking up a few fallen branches. However, for many rural properties, more substantial work is needed thanks to winter storms. As Oregon's Department of Forestry has

warned, fallen firs create ideal conditions for outbreaks of Douglas fir beetles.

Native to Oregon, Douglas fir beetles are usually present in our forests in low numbers, but populations can rise substantially under certain conditions.

These small, dark-colored beetles live beneath trees' outer bark and can be quite destructive. Their feeding on a tree's interior tissues creates networks of tunnels that eventually kill the tree by disrupting its nutrient flow. Beetles can also bring in harmful fungi that contribute to the tree's demise.

After overwintering under the bark, fir beetles emerge in April and fly off to colonize new trees. Outward signs of infestation include the fir's needles yellowing and then turning brown.

Healthy trees can generally fend off pests by produc-

ing chemicals that act as natural pesticides or resinous pitch that repels insects.

However, stressed or damaged trees, like those toppled in storms, have compromised defenses and are more easily colonized. Thus, removing this winter's fallen trees before the beetles' spring emergence is important for preventing an outbreak.

Additionally, if the trees are cut into firewood, stacking it in a sunny location, away from living trees, and covering it with clear plastic will help kill any beetles already in residence.

Other methods of beetle control involve using chemicals. Initially, commercial insecticides were the go-to approach, but this was costly and often logistically difficult. More recent methods use the beetles' own biology against them. Initially,

when beetles arrive at a tree, they emit natural chemicals (pheromones) that attract other beetles.

Later, to prevent overcrowding, they stop producing attractants and begin producing pheromones that act as a "no vacancy" sign to keep other beetles away.

Both types of pheromone can be made in laboratories and used in beetle control. Traps can be baited with attractant pheromones to lure beetles into a certain area and packets of repellent pheromone can be placed throughout a stand of trees to create a beetle exclusion zone.

So, anyone procrastinating about spring clean-up on their property should keep in mind the clock is ticking on beetle emergence.

Don't let the beetles get to your trees before you do.

MILITARY HERITAGE CHRONICLES — WELCOME HOME



CAL APPLEBEE
Special to Siuslaw News

I have written roughly one hundred Military Heritage Chronicles over the last decade, covering a wide variety of eras of military disciplines. A few of those have dealt with the Vietnam War, which I always struggle with, as I did not serve there, or then, when many of my friends and acquaintances did.

Last year's April Chronicles was one such article, as it covered the growing number

of memorials to our Vietnam veterans, scattered around the nation, and particularly the state of Oregon.

And, it was also timed to coincide with the newly established national holiday, National Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day, on March 29 of each year. So it is only appropriate that I re-visit the topic as we approach that date again, particularly when we had the Oregon Memorial Traveling Wall dedicated to our state's Vietnam vets, visit Florence this past December, and anticipate the arrival of "The Wall That Heals" in April.

The Wall That Heals is being brought to Florence by Spruce Point Assisted Living & Memory Care and is one of several replicas of the original Wall in Washington D.C.

We have had variations of the Wall come to Florence twice in the past. This one coming in April is a different version at three-quarter scale and 375 feet in length. Its only 2019 appearance here

in Oregon includes a 53' Mobile Education Center which displays multiple elements of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund programs, such as items left at the actual Wall in D.C.

On Saturday, April 6, at 1 p.m., members of the various Veteran Service Organizations here in Florence will conduct a remembrance ceremony which I encourage the entire community to attend.

Despite — and in contrast to — our society's response to our returning Vietnam veterans at that time in the 1970's, the Wall memorial in our nation's capital was created in the early 1980's to honor the more than 58,000 Americans who died in that war. Since then, over 400 names have been added as well. It is one of the most visited memorials in our nation's capital.

There are nearly a half-dozen traveling wall replicas of the wall, and multiple state and local memorials to the service of those brave Veterans in existence as well, and they are growing with two more being created here in Oregon as you read this — Medford and Salem.

I personally have never visited the Wall in D.C., nor any traveling replica. I have heard

multiple stories from friends and acquaintances over the years who have visited, and there is a common theme in what they have experienced and witnessed: Many Vietnam Veterans do experience a healing.

That certainly lends itself to the visiting wall's name.

There is another theme, or common saying, in our society: "It's never too late" or "Better late than never."

There is no greater application of those statements than today with the growing number of tributes to recognize the overdue recognition of the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam-era veterans.

Remember to thank our Vietnam veterans on March 29, their official recognition day. And I encourage you to visit The Wall That Heals when it is here in Florence, to witness that healing impact it has on our vets.

And tell them "Welcome Home."

Learn more about military heritage by visiting www.oregoncoastmilitarymuseum.com or visit the museum, which is open Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., located at 2145 Kingwood St. in Florence.

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